



**Draft Minutes
Town of Westville
Committee of The Whole
Council Chambers
December 5, 2022 – 6:00 pm**

1. Call To Order

Mayor White called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Lennie White, Deputy Mayor Clarrie MacKinnon, Councillor Mitchell MacGregor, Councillor Meghan Bragg, Chief Administrative Officer Scot Weeres, Recording Secretary Kristen Reed, Wade Tibbo and Heidi Sinclair.

Regrets

Councillor Bernie Murphy

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

4. Territory Acknowledgement

Mayor White read the Territory acknowledgement and the flying of the Mi'kmaq flag. He also acknowledged the history of African Nova Scotians.

5. Presentations

Pictou County Partnership

Heidi Sinclair, Director of Strategy and Communications explained the presentation is to give an activity update for the end of the third quarter. They were previously know as Pictou County REN. The Partnership works by Connect, Collaborate and Communicate. Municipalities are key and they are a partnership investment in our future. Funding by municipalities is matched by the Province. There is a top down model of resources that is complex and hard to navigate. Business needs are a bottom up model. This doesn't leave business owners with time or knowledge to navigate the resources. Pictou County Partnership attempts to be the bridge between the two. They can connect the Businesses and with the resources that are available. They are a small team of four people and the CEO Scott Ferguson.

Wade Tibbo, Manager of Business Development and Innovation joined the end of July when he returned to Pictou County from the Valley. Since July 125 businesses have connected, held 5 sessions (New Glasgow, Stellarton, Trenton, Westville and Pictou) which were one stop shop for networking, information and answering questions. They learned that many businesses are looking for more one on one service. There have been three networking opportunities including one with Ignite. They are also developing an Innovation program and should have more information the end of January. The key messages they have received

are businesses are burning out, lack of help and labour, and Fiona has had a large impact due to the loss of inventory, shipping delays, and more cash outflow for clean up, generators etc. They are struggling more now than during Covid. The top three pain points that businesses have mentioned are Labour- availability, skills, housing and transportation for them. Second is time to navigate existing resources, it's out there but don't have the time to figure out what applies to them and how to get it. Lastly, access to capital for growth and improvements. The support for Westville businesses has included Program navigation, digital adoption, connect to NSBI (expert assistance) and small business week advertising. They are also working on succession planning and one-on one business counselling. Investment attractions include Bioeconomy Development opportunity zone initiative. It is a certification and risk rating program for areas with sustainable surpluses of biomass, and feedstock. Pictou County have received an A rating and had many companies already reach out. Submitted an application for Clean Fuel fund but are waiting on the results. For Bioeconomy Business attraction looking at aquaculture development area. It's like a business park on water for shell fish and marine plants. Local areas are identified as prime areas but it's a costly and time consuming process. This does all the ground work such as testing, etc so waters can be utilized.

Workforce development had a newcomer welcome social which had 100 people attend. Destination Canada had a recruitment fair in Paris, France and Rabat, Morocco in 2022. There were 32 positions with 11 companies available. 165 attendees for in person one on ones. Received 7000 applications so far from the virtual forum, 20 of which were doctors and healthcare workers which were immediately forwarded to appropriate people. They had a virtual reality video for those that were high potential. It included the splash pad and Acadia park.

Strategic Plan includes dealing with the labour shortage, and future competitive advantage of digital readiness.

Mayor White Thanked them for their presentation with great info. It's a lot to digest. Councillor MacGregor acknowledged it was great to see the additional info regarding Bioeconomy. Good to see it's more than just cutting down trees for fuel. It's worth looking into. Discussion took place that Fiona brought a lot of trees down and more are continuing to come down. As they dry they become a danger as it creates heat and fire hazards.

Province is doing economic tools review. RENs are a tool in that toolbox so the Province is examining if it is still in alignment. There are seven RENs in the province so they want to ensure that everyone is covered.

Deputy Mayor MacKinnon asked about the interactions with Noble. Are they involved in the need for capital for businesses to grow? They are part of the pie as well as Credit Union, BDC and others depending on the needs. He also acknowledged how amazing it is to see so many young servers working. Many are 14 years old and up.

6. New Business

a. Anti Racism Charter

b. Unsightly Yard Bylaw Discussion

The Town have received several complaints about grass. The dangerous and Unsightly criteria do not cover length of grass unless there is some other item that fits the criteria such as dangerous materials hidden by the grass there is nothing the Town can do. Mayor White did a quick google search and some of the other communities that have a yard bylaw limit the grass to 6-8 inches and have penalties from \$100 to \$1,000. Councillor Bragg has had conversations with people on the other side that are creating natural lawns which are more drought resistant and better pollination. If the criteria is long grass than what are the parameters for people making an effort to go natural? You don't want people growing beautiful wildflowers and end up getting penalized. Deputy Mayor MacKinnon agreed with Councillor Bragg. He attended a fall rally of Garden clubs and one of the presentations was leave nature alone more. It was excellent and there were handouts for everyone and showed how interdependent everything is. There should not be a grass measurer in Westville but be more strict with the houses that are Dangerous and Unsightly. The other Councillors agreed that more can be done with what is currently in place and education and assistance. It was reminded that this only came about because of a number of complaints but the consensus is the current best action is no action.

c. Upcoming Meeting schedule

With the next Council meeting being November 7th and December having the Christmas holidays the upcoming meeting schedule needs to be confirmed.

The October meeting moved to November 7th. The Police Meetings will remain the third Tuesday of the months, and the PAC meetings will be the third Wednesday. The Committee of the Whole meeting will be Monday December 5th at 6pm and the Council meeting will be Monday December 19th at 6pm.

7. Next Meetings

a. Board of Police Commissioners Meeting

Westville Council Chambers
October 18, 2022 – 6 pm

b. Planning Advisory Committee

Westville Council Chambers
October 19, 2022 – 6pm

c. Council Meeting

Westville Council Chambers
November 7, 2022 – 6pm

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00pm.

Mayor: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Date Approved: _____